

TRADITION MAINTENANCE FACILITATION, EXPERIENTIAL CONTINUATION,  
AND THE NATIVE AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW

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The focus of this paper is upon tradition maintenance and the role of one who becomes a facilitator in collecting or disseminating traditional materials for a Native American group. The vehicle used for beginning this discussion will be transcribed interviews with Native Americans who will be speaking about their views concerning traditional practices, what can be done to maintain those practices, the value of such maintenance, and, sometimes, the way in which their particular tribe is dealing with maintenance.

In referring to a "tradition maintenance facilitator" in the following pages, I refer to those people working under the direction of a Native American group (this does not mean the person is not Native American) who guide the collection of materials for historic reconstruction purposes; those hired as consultants to assist in teaching techniques to, for example, Native fieldworkers collecting their own materials; those who bring traditional practitioners into an academic or classroom setting for traditional knowledge dissemination; in sum, any person who assists in bringing traditions to a Native American group or aids them in recording those traditions without necessarily becoming a participatory agent in an induced natural setting or an editor of materials without Native American input. The "tradition maintenance facilitator" will sometimes be described as an agent of "experiential continuation"; that is, he is one who helps a group or individual continue receiving an experience heretofore always a part of their lives, but presently lacking because of factors such as distance from home or the unavailability of people as the medium through which traditional knowledge and practices can be transmitted as in the past. For example, take a Native American student who leaves home for the first time and goes off to a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school for four years, leaving a household which maintains many traditional practices. His new life's arena, he finds, does little to link his home with an academic setting.<sup>1</sup> Consider also the number of Native American elders who pass away each year and take hundreds of tales with them. Those tales which were recorded are now often being told through the aid of technological materials.<sup>2</sup> However, the point to be made at this time concerns the ability of an agent defined as a "tradition maintenance facilitator" to help Native Americans continue experiencing traditional practices in new settings or in new times when technology is an accepted part of their lives. As John Arlee points out in the following interview, one may question what is unique about a Native American once he loses his traditions in the dominant white society. If such occurs, John fears the government will no longer recognize them nor their rights. John is a Flathead Indian from Arlee, Montana.

(In the following dialogues, standard notations are: . . . =pause; ( )=author's insert; \_\_\_\_\_=name deleted.)

1/6/76     St. Ignatius, Montana

Steve:     Would you tell me your age and tribe?

John:     I'm thirty-five and I'm Salish Flathead from the Flathead Reservation. Around here, I guess, there are different types of the Salish: the Bitterroot Salish, the Pend Oreilles here, the Kalispells. And we're all kind of combined.

Steve:     In terms of a lot of your traditional practices like traditional music and traditional storytelling and traditional dances and religious practices . . . were you brought up with these in your home?

John:     Yes. When I was small, we went to everything. You see, my great-grandfather is the one that raised me when I was a baby and I learned the language right there. When I came to school at the Ursuline's, I had to learn English. But I was raised in Medicine Dances . . . like what's going on this part of the year. This month is when we have our Medicine Dances and, as a matter of fact, just last night we had one and we'll have another one tonight. I do my little share of work (at the dances). I don't know everything about it yet, you know, but in time I hope, if my heart is good . . . that if I'm still on the right path . . . that I might be able to be gifted with more, you know. I guess this is the way of Indian people . . . that you don't learn everything at once. How you keep your heart . . . if you keep goin' in the right direction, you gain a little more knowledge. One of these days when I get white-haired, I'll be glad to be able to pass it on.

Steve:     Your great-grandfather raised you?

John:     Uh-huh.

Steve:     Did he tell you many local tales or legends from this area or did he teach you any of the traditional songs or crafts?

John:     Well, there's many things that he's taught me. You know, at a young age, I guess everybody's through that. At a young age, nobody pays attention. You're too much the play. And he passed on when I was seventeen. I was really sorry. You know, about five or six years ago when I really turned to the good, I thought I'd forgotten everything, but it's not really forgotten. It was planted into me at the young age and now it's makin' sense to me. But there was a lot of stories that he told and I tell the kids these stories and his own songs . . . his personal songs . . . medicine songs. Then, of course, the drumming and the singing that I do now. I've learned from the other people, the other elders from around the reservation. Actually, all the people are teachers, you know; teachers of the children. Not just the grandfather. My grandfather showed me a lot of the roots and herbs, you know, for medicine. It still hasn't sunk in yet, but I imagine one of these days it will come to use.

Steve: Do you see that a lot of the young people today are straying away from the traditional practices?

John: There is . . . it seems like to me. I see there is a need, especially for our language. That is really gone. But the practices. Well, I've noticed some of the kids. They're interested in Indian culture, but there isn't enough of the people that want to get involved and help. That's what I pray for some of the boys that's my age, you know . . . that was raised by elders too. If they'd kind of get off the streets and pitch in and help with the younger people, I think we could leave something behind that could be carried on. The way it is now, there is just myself and a few other young people that's actually really involved in helpin'.

Steve: What do you attribute the loss of traditional practices or loss of interest to among youth? What pulls them away from traditional practices?

John: Well, I think it has a lot to do with the school activities. My belief . . . if there was any way that . . . even if they had given the Indians one day out of the week where there was no school activities at all to interrupt the Indian . . . if we could have one day to teach whatever different things: the drumming, the makin' moccasins, tanning hides. But the way it is now, I see in school that the young boys are all pulled away from . . . well, when I go to teach drumming and singing, they get pulled away for basketball practice or football practice. There is always this thing and so we're short on time. Now, I get these girls, you know, that's in this club. I wish there was a place that . . . somebody would hear me about sittin' at least one day out of the week (aside).

Steve: You work at a local high school?

John: No. I'm hired through the tribe as an Indian consultant and I just keep myself free whenever a school asks for me to go over and lecture or something. I see what they have in school, you know. They have about twenty minutes of Indian Studies which isn't much. By the time you get started (and the) kids get relaxed, it's time to fold up everything and you really can't teach much.

Steve: Do you think that the other techniques like bringing in the older people to tell stories or legends or having a special class on Indian crafts would be good to work into a curriculum at a high school?

John: Well, they're doing it here in St. Ignatius. In \_\_\_\_\_, they haven't done too much. I guess the Indian Studies teacher there hasn't really went out to get anybody to go and help. The material she's gettin' is just from books and everything like this. She's called me up once to go and I went and then she got cancelled to something else. So she never did get back to me.

Steve: What do most of the old people think about younger people falling away from traditional practices?

John: Well, to the Medicine People--the people that have a bundle--you know, with their medicine bag? They're worried. You know, it's usually kind of passed on down--these things--on to the younger people. And they (the elders) worry now. They don't know who to hand it down to. Even if they did hand it down, how the kids are wild today . . . how they're goin' to handle it? They might just misuse it; hurt someone or things like this. See, all these medicine bundles is your gift that . . . (it is) your spirit to help your fellow man, you know, when they're in need. And they (the elders) worry about the kids today. No one really pays attention. I guess ever'body's too smart. They've gone to school and learned ever'thing and now they're smarter than their elders who they don't care to listen. That's the main thing. One thing that I . . . I think a lot of the older people that go to the classes . . . they (have) been hurt by the kids that . . . the (kids) never really pay attention. The respect is gone. That's the big thing here with the Indian people is respect for ever'thing; for animals and what all.

Steve: Do you think that the loss of language contributed to this loss quite a bit?

John: I think so. It was one of the things. There's many things.

Steve: Why do you think the language was lost between generations?

John: I've been tryin' to figure that out. It seems that--like for my father's age--right around the 50s and 60s . . . sixty-year old people . . . see they, the older people . . . they all spoke the language, you know, and my father's age an' them . . . they understand it, but they never taught the children. You know, from there, they started talkin' English. And, I don't know, it was durin' that gap there. I guess that's when the Indian was made fun of at that time, you know. If he'd start talkin' . . . like here at the Ursuline's when they used to go to school here. I know when they used to talk about it . . . the older people . . . my dad an' them . . . that if they started talkin' Indian, they were told not to, you know, to quit the language.

Steve: Was it something to be ashamed of, you mean?

John: Yeah, in a way. They all cut their hair at that time. You know, everyone had haircuts. And I don't know . . . it was just that one age group there. And now, my age group, they feel the same way and there's some tryin' to push. And these younger people that . . . the younger children I see today . . . there's a lot of 'em that want to learn.

Steve: You mean the real young kids?

John: Yeah. . . . the ones I'm kinda workin' with . . . twelve-, thirteen-, fourteen-, fifteen-year olds. They do want to learn.

Steve: Do you think it's too late to recapture the language and recapture some of these traditional practices?

John: No.

Steve: What types of things can be done to preserve them? You already mentioned it would be great if they had one school day set aside. But what types of things should be done in the home?

John: If I knew the answer, I guess I would be workin' on it now. But gosh, it's . . . I think about it. There's another person in Wellpinit, Washington that's started in about two years ago to pick up on the culture and teach the language.

Steve: Who is that?

John: Louie Andrews (on the Spokane Reservation). We see there is a need for the language, but how to bring it back home is another thing. Even myself, I can't hardly get to talkin' with my kids.

Steve: Do you find many people saying it's too late . . . traditional practices won't ever come back again?

John: I've heard it. Yeah, I've heard it all the time. But I always think there's a way out and I'm strugglin'. There's been many times I've wanted to give up too . . . about ready to fold in and throw in my chips, but something always comes up and brings me on. I guess it's like you get up in the morning and you're ready to go, you know, and by the end of the day you're just ready to throw in the towel and (you) wake up the next morning and you're full of life again.

Steve: Is there an effort being made here to tape stories and oral histories from the older people?

John: Last . . . just a year ago we started tapin'. It was under Title IV that we got started . . . that gave us the idea and then it was just a pilot thing. Then we went into it on our own and we found there was a need for it. We tapped the tribe for some money and we got funded for the Kootenai and the Flathead cultural groups. See, at that time I was the chairman of the Flathead Cultural Group and they told me to get five committeemen. Oh gosh, you know, I didn't know what I was doing and I didn't know how I was going to go about it, so I went around tryin' to ask people if they'd go to work and everyone I had in mind (to help in the project) was already workin' for the

government and I couldn't hire someone who was already workin'. So finally, I ended up with five people and we sat around for at least two weeks and didn't know what was goin' to happen. And then we started callin' in . . . we made a day for consultants . . . bringin' 'em in . . . on a Friday, we brought 'em in. And we brought in old people around, you know. And they just sat around the table. And when anyone felt a story was comin' on, he just went ahead. And we just left the tape recorder going. It went all day. It came out really good. We have a lot of tapes down there now. There was one man. He passed away this past summer . . . Pete Beaverhead. That was a man (who) was gifted with stories. Himself, he told us that when he was young, he never played around all the time, you know, where the other kids would be chasin' around, playin' around. He couldn't figure out why, 'cause he was always sittin' around with (the) older people, you know, and old people sat down and he started talkin' and smokin' pipe and he used to squeeze in there and just sit there. And I guess it was for a purpose, you know, to hold all these stories. And we have a lot of stories from him. And now, finally we've come out with a calendar. We had an idea with a calendar of each month. What happened years ago (is on it). And that's out already now. And through all these tapes, we transcribed them the best we could and as close as we could, interpreted them and now these--what's left of the committee . . . I broke loose of the committee 'cause I had too much other things going on--they're takin' these stories . . . there's a lotta legends and old stories and history stories that they've made little booklets out of. They're makin' (them) and we're plannin' on bringin' them into the school this year sometime.

Steve: Were the stories told in English?

John: No, in our language.

Steve: And you translated into English for the booklets?

John: Right, uh-huh.

Steve: Do you think transferring knowledge through the written instead of the spoken word will affect the remembrance of it?

John: I don't know. I really don't know. I look at it this way. It's a changing world all the time and we can't really bring the Indian language out now. This (booklets) would be one way to fill that gap where the kids are talkin' English because we couldn't talk to 'em in Indian and so this is the best way. We translate it, you know. All these committee members, they all speak the language and workin' together, they can make the translation as close as they could to what it was in Indian. And so, I think to fill this gap right now, this English-speakin' Indians is through the English (booklets). And we're copyin' those tapes and we're going to store them way for future, you know, in case the language does come back and then they could look back into the tapes.

- Steve: Some friends of mine work down with the Navaho in the Southwest and they're developing techniques where they have bi-lingual books . . . where they have Navaho on one side of the page and English on the other. And the students are taught to read both English and Navaho. They've found the retention of information is better if they have it written in both languages than if its just English, because to them English is still the second language and up here I suppose your local Flathead language is the second language and English is the primary language?
- John: Yeah, that sounds like a good idea. I may even pass it on to . . . we have a one young guy in St. Ignatius . . . Tony. I got him onto the committee. He was probably the last one to get on. And we brought in a linguist to teach us the international alphabet and he (Tony) really caught onto it. And he's kinda workin' over now with changin' over the words to international alphabet. He's makin' up a dictionary . . . a simple dictionary for beginners and I might even pass this on to him. Maybe he can kick it around and make it, you know, the next booklets they make, he could try that . . . I suppose with that language. See, we're tryin' to . . . the international people that they can get it, but, you know, in four days time I really caught on, you know, and it was just short time. I guess 'cause I know the language. Once you get the sounds you put those sounds together and you're ready to go. I really see . . . we're going to make it. It's a tough little struggle. Last year--I guess about this time--we didn't know what we was doing, you know, and we were gettin' started. And after I got my committee members together, we took a trip to Rocky Boy School. Now they've been going (cultural education) for five years or so.
- Steve: Where's that at?
- John: That's over the mountain (west of) here by Havre . . . just south of Havre. And they've been going for about five years now. They're teaching. They're makin' their own books and everything like here.
- Steve: Which group is on the Rocky Boy Reservation?
- John: That's Chippewa-Cree.
- Steve: How did this program get started?
- John: The way I heard it from them, it started from one young guy and two women, I guess it was . . . that decided to bring it into the school and teach. The first year they said there was no response at all from the kids. There was little parent involvement. The next year there was some involvement from the parents and then they still had no response at all from the kids . . . nothing. So these two ladies were ready to give up, you know. They said they didn't know every-

thing about what they were teachin', but they were tryin' to teach. They had seen a thing where they wanted to teach the language. And they were ready to give up at the end of their second year. I guess, well, the third year came up and that's when the things really came out. The kids really started to talkin' . . . talkin' the language. Then what happened is that they saved an alphabet that I guess, it looks like Greek symbols and they use this alphabet. Now the kids are writing now and going on their fifth year. They followed these kids from, I guess it was, kindergarten they started in with and they followed them and kept addin' on more, you know in five years. Now they're comin' in this year. I think they're (the tribe) going to get a new school; a high school. I suggested to them before. I said, "Gee, it would be nice if you could follow your kids right into high school." Usually if you . . . their's (the school) went to eighth grade and after eighth grade, they (the students) moved out to Box Elder . . . to a high school there; a public school. And I said, "You're going to lose the kids from there." But now they have a high school and I think they can follow them all the way through.

Steve: What do you think is going to happen if some of the reservations and some of areas where groups of Indian people are living together . . . if something like this isn't done? If traditions are lost?

John: I don't know. Gees, it's . . . I'm afraid to see that. The government will just kinda move in and say, "Well, show me where you're Indian" or something like this or take away whatever they (Indian people) have.

As the interview points out, John and other members of the tribe are concerned about the upcoming generation. They want them to receive traditional instruction. If, as John suggests, one day a week could be set aside for such a task (much in the way history is taught to non-Indians in most American schools) the younger generation would grow in knowledge and appreciation of their past and the living remnants of it, their elders. John notes the success of the cultural program at the Rocky Boy Reservation and rightly attributes its success to a well thought-out follow-through program. By beginning with young children and following them through their high school education, one can set up a progression "experiential continuance" program with tradition bearers as the teachers. By taping elders and using them in classroom settings, the traditional roles are partially re-instituted, for traditionally the vehicle was similar, but the setting was in the home.

The next interview is with Adeline Fredine, the Director of the Colville Tribal History Project. This interview was taped at Adeline's home in Nespelem, Washington.



1/2/76    Nespelem, Washington

Steve:     Which band are you from?

Adeline:   My grandmother was from Okanogan and then she was then raised in Sanpoil and then they moved back into Nespelem. So then that's where my mother comes in at . . . the Okanogan (band) and my dad is from the Methow (band).

Steve:     About how long have the Colville Confederated Tribes had a tribal history project?

Adeline:   This is going into the second year really. I'm doing research on the eleven bands in this area.

Steve:     What types of things are you collecting for your tribal history project?

Adeline:   Well, history and their culture.

Steve:     So you're collecting things like folktales, legends . . .

Adeline:   Personal history from the time that they can remember and from the time that their grandmothers and maybe even their great-grandmothers (lived). You know, stories that they've handed down. That was the only way that they had of keeping track of their history. It was all oral.

Steve:     So, you're dealing mostly with the older people?

Adeline:   Uh-huh.

Steve:     What are your tools for collecting? What do you use primarily?

Adeline:   We're using tape recorders.

Steve:     Are you using video-tapes at all?

Adeline:   I wish we could. I really wish we could.

Steve:     You're collecting old photographs? Is that correct?

Adeline:   Right.

Steve:     Then you're getting people to recognize who these people were in the photographs?

Adeline:   Uh-huh, that's a hard part of it because we're goin' so far back in history that there aren't very many around that, you know, can fill

in. We can place the ones, oh, maybe fifty, sixty years ago real easy, but then you go any further than that and it's real hard for them to remember.

Steve: Are there many published historical accounts from this area?

Adeline: None.

Steve: None?

Adeline: None. It's just all brand new. There's quite a bit written up from Dr. Vern Ray but they're not published.

Steve: So what you're trying to do is to collect all this material and put it together into a tribal history book?

Adeline: That's right.

Steve: Are you going to do anything with film?

Adeline: I've collected one film that's out there in Spokane. That's (it's) from the Sanpoil to Omak to Waterville. That was 1930, '31, and '34. And then another one from '33 to '34 from Howard that's mostly on the Sanpoil area.

Steve: Are you finding that these elderly people remember a lot of stories that used to be told to them by their parents and grandparents?

Adeline: It's depending on who they are. A lot of them will, you know, if you catch them in the right atmosphere. And it's surprising, a lot of them don't. You go back and you ask them about, oh, certain tales that you want to get straight and it's real hard for them. They'll have to maybe go to somebody else or maybe take about a week or two for them to remember. It's sad.

Steve: What kind of problems do you run into when you send people out to tape stories and you've got so many different tribes and bands on the reservation? Do you run into any special problems because of different languages or different sets of stories?

Adeline: The only problem is getting the Colvilles to, you know, stay with the Colvilles, or the Nez Perce to stay with the Nez Perce or the Paloose to . . .

Steve: So you're finding that because your people that are going out with the tape recorders are Indian, and because they come from a certain tribe or band, that it's important that they collect from people from their own background?

Adeline: Yes. There's a lot to say in the Moses band or the Nez Perce band. There was a lot of feeling and, you know, conflict and feeling toward each other in their back history that they won't come out and say, well, that Chief Moses was a bad guy or Chief Joseph was a bad guy.

Steve: So what you're saying is you think that if somebody from the same band that they're from goes out, they're going to get more information that way. What is your usual procedure when you have something taped? Then what do you do with it?

Adeline: It's transcribed and usually gone over pretty good by the interviewer to make sure they're getting it all down correctly. Usually the one that's doin' the interviewing does the transcribing so that they'll know the feeling and, you know, the atmosphere that went with the interview which really helps.

Steve: Do you think the collecting of historical accounts orally on tapes is valid? Do you find conflicting accounts sometimes . . . people don't agree on things?

Adeline: Not among the tribal people that have, you know, originally been here, but you will find, say the Moses (band) coming in and their history will be different than ours. I mean the interpretation of it.

Steve: What other tribes would be in this same situation? The ones that aren't native to this area?

Adeline: The Nez Perce . . . the Palouse. The (indigenous) Okanogan and Nespelem and Sanpoil an' the Colville and the Lakes. Their history was mostly, you know, all the same.

Steve: What about the Wenatchees that are here in the southern part of the reservation?

Adeline: The Wenatchees are a little bit different . . . not very much. They kind of went back and forth between here and there (south of the reservation).

Steve: Why did the tribe think it was necessary to start this tribal history project?

Adeline: I wish it was the tribes that started it. What happened was that I got started in on doing research for (the) Yakima (tribe) of all things. They came up here and wanted to know the history up here, and then I went to the Agency down here and explained to them what I was doing and they realized then that there wasn't that much, you know, written. So it was about a year later that they called me in and we started this history research up here.

Steve: Do you think the project is timely because of how many older people are dying who remember this material?

Adeline: I wish they'd have done it about fifteen or twenty years ago 'cause then our grandmothers would've been alive. It is--they realize it too--you know, awful hard now.

Steve: Are any of your collected materials going to be used in teaching young children?

Adeline: Uh-huh.

Steve: How will the materials be used?

Adeline: I've been working now on using the legends. The legends was the Indian's way of teaching the younger generation about their background and their culture (and) their geography--most any way you put it--their lessons on like, say, greed or selfishness or right.

Steve: So they're thinking about taking some of these stories and working them into the school curriculum?

Adeline: Uh-huh.

Steve: As part of the course work?

Adeline: Yes. This will be done through illustration, especially for the younger kids. It will be in color(ing) books or, you know, that form, so that they will have all three contacts with it. One would be visual, the other one would be hearing the story and then be able to color it (in) say, the pictures they're talkin' about; a coyote or a magpie or a raven.

Steve: That's only two. You say they hear it and they color it and they'd also read it? Right?

Adeline: Uh-huh.

Steve: Do you see that this is going to develop into something more than just collecting materials? Do you see that perhaps the tribe is going to have an archives or a tribal museum or anything like this that may develop out of all the research?

Adeline: They're working on it. They (the tribe) put in for a culture center. We thought it came through on this Bicentennial. But it was the wrong one. Everybody was so excited about it but it turned out it was the Nez Perce Cultural Center. But they're still working on it.

Steve: Is there any effort being made to locate and reclaim artifacts that people have off the reservation?

Adeline: There's been several people that have promised theirs back here. So we do have, you know, a lot of people that are, you know, makin' out their wills to the Center that isn't here (yet). But like I said, I hope . . . they're hoping and we're hoping that everything will fall into place.

Steve: How many people do you have that go out to collect tapes and do your fieldwork for you?

Adeline: Well, five good ones that are, you know, really working at it and they're real interested in it and you can say, you know, there are five that are really workin' at it.

Steve: And they're all paid through this government grant?

Adeline: No. They're working under another program, but they're working over the last two years in this program.

Steve: Do you think they have collected a substantial amount of material over the last two years on this program?

Adeline: I think they have.

Steve: Do you see that you've got a lot of work ahead of you?

Adeline: Oh yes. It goes . . . it's just endless. It seems like you get into one thing and then there's five more. You get into those five more, you know, and it just goes on and on. It's real beautiful.

As this interview reflects, Adeline is now primarily concerned with collecting a wide variety of data in order to publish a history of the Colville Reservation and the bands and tribes that reside there. Adeline is also confronting many problems well-known to the fieldworker in any field. Who does the collecting, who is to be collected from, how collections are to be transcribed, who is to transcribe the collections, and how contextual and historical considerations fit into the picture are all of importance to her. Applicability of this material to a classroom is being developed in the project. It is interesting to note that Adeline sprung from another tribal history program: that of the Yakima. Many of the tribes in the Northwest area are now developing tribal history programs, often funded by the tribes. The author is aware of such programs on the Warm Springs, Yakima, Spokane, Makah, Colville, and Lapwai Reservations. There is a growing need for new, non-traditional ways for recording materials which in the past were only passed orally or demonstratively. At the American Folklore Society Meeting in Portland, Oregon in 1974, a Yakima man, Larry George, told a traditional folktale to a captivated audience. He went on to

present a taped tale which had an accompanying filmstrip depicting the tale's characters. At the Third Annual Sunflower Festival on the Colville Reservation in 1973, Indian students enacted a local legend, wearing costumes of the animal characters in the legend. These two examples demonstrate how new ways of transferring traditional knowledge are being adapted for young Indian students. Movies, filmstrips, records, photographs, slides, video-tapes, and tapes are being utilized in schools to bring traditional knowledge through twentieth-century media. Such materials take the place of the many people who were tradition bearers in the past. The form of the material has changed but, hopefully, the content will remain close to the original, even through translation.

The next interview is with Moses George. Moses can remember much of his traditional past. He has done a series on local Omak, Washington radio station (KOMW) telling folktales in English; most people in that area speak English as their primary language. Moses has given presentations on Indian culture to many groups and has begun a dictionary of the Wenatchee language. He is presently attending classes at the Wenatchee Community College extension in Omak, Washington. Moses resides in north central Washington on the southern part of the Colville Reservation.

1/3/76      Kartar, Colville Reservation

Steve:      How old are you?

Moses:      I'll be 69, February 22 next month (1976).

Steve:      How old was your mother when she passed away last summer?

Moses:      82.

Steve:      You are part Yakima and part Wenatchee.

Moses:      Yes. You see, my lineage is from the Yakima. We have part . . . I forget the exact nomenclature of that tribe on the coast . . . Chief Seattle is my great-, great-, great-grandfather. I guess it was my mother's great-grandfather. She stayed with them (on the coast) and learned their language. She stayed with them for five or six years when she was a little baby. (She) grew up there. When her parents came to bring her back, she didn't know them because she couldn't speak their (her parents') language.

Steve:      Where did you originally hear your Indian folktales?

Moses:      Well, in Indian tradition and their lifestyle was that there was no entertainment or education other than having a get-together after the dinner . . . to most people . . . to me it was supper, which was eaten approximately anytime after sundown or six o'clock. You might time it, but seven o'clock was the latest probably. And from there on until bedtime, it was the traditional habit of the people to tell stories.

The sage of each family which was usually the grandfather or somebody that (had) a renowned memory would give details of events that happened or a historical tale or just entertaining, you might say, stories for the younger people and the adults both. And these things were etched into our system and, of course, it (has) gone by the wayside now since our people have been educated to where they've cast aside that. It's gone away with, done away with. Most of the younger people nowadays speak English.

Steve: Who did you learn most of your stories from?

Moses: Mostly from my father and my mother and my grandfather. I can recall my maternal grandfather who, incidently, was a scout for the army--the engineers that surveyed the Canadian boundary. I don't know where he started from. Probably in the Montana country. He was the guide from the army engineers from there (Montana) clear to the coast. And he told me quite a bit of it (stories). Now, I was a little bit young, but I recall now some of the things he told me. His was the original and the genuine of which I have some in my mind yet and I'm tryin' to get it down on paper. Also, my dad, he was of that school and he told me a lot of facts: history and lots of things that are not of record in history which you could pre-date and assemble them all together and they'd pan out exactly. I studied most of the writings of your historians and storytellers who have sold books up to now and find that they are workin' on certain dates only and they try to pinpoint certain events to a certain time whereas my dad would tell me about the time when he was a young fella . . . and he participated in some of things particularly with Chief Moses. And his (stories) were very interesting. These I'm going to try to get down some day. If not, some titles (of stories) and everything like that for my son Wendel. And my mother. On my mother's side, of course, she was quite a storyteller. She told me ever since I can remember, a lot of the folklore, you might say: small stories for the younger people. I credit her with all our Chipmunk stories, Chickadee stories and any little stories that you might want to hear when you're three or four years--just to where you're conscious of life--up to almost adulthood. I notice a lot of people have written up some of these stories and they don't quite touch the old, old story. The younger people that have written them up or the non-Indian people that have written them up have deviated from the actual intent and context of the original stories.

Steve: Do you ever have occasion to tell your stories?

Moses: Well . . . yes. Now take that young feller in there. He's our first grandson. I used to tell them stories when they were (young) fellas. There were two of them; then there were three, then there were four of 'em. It was quite a thing. They'd get on my lap after dinner, just like the old days. And sometimes durin' the day, they'd want to

hear stories and I'd tell 'em, especially about little Chipmunk, Chickadee, and that Little Digger, and all. We had about a dozen little animals and birds (for) young people and they just loved that. They enjoyed it very much and I believe you could ask any of them and they (my grandsons) could probably tell you word for word the same 'cause if they recall it which I'm sure they would at first . . . it was something in their heads. It isn't a case of rote or drillin' into their head. It's just the interest they show. It's really interesting.

Steve: What value is there in writing these down?

Moses: Well, for myself and my family, I think it's a case where I've lost a bit forever, for eternity. My mother had so much to tell me yet. My wife and I, especially she, says, "We're going to go up to your mother's this summer and take a recorder and go up there and talk to her." And that was just before July. And we got a date about say July or August to come up there. And she caught pneumonia on the 20th of July and died . . . just quick. See . . . and . . . a . . . you ask what value it is. Well, for instance, I tried to recall some of those tales that she told me there and you can't quite grasp some of it that . . . it's just hazy there. It's on a cloud and you can't quite reach it. My sister, she's a bit older than I am. She's still alive and she helps me out on some of this stuff. She's got better recollection on some of this. And the value of it is this: I think I could give it or try to put it down as a record of what it would be on tape and have it in the family which (is for) whatever they want to do with it, whether they want to expand it, put it into books . . . fine. I believe I don't quite have time for those things 'cause I'm interested in other larger (things which are) more interesting to my way of thinking about Indian culture.

Steve: What do you see as some of the main reasons why young people today aren't interested in or don't remember any of these traditions?

Moses: Well, one bad feature of the whole situation is in our area here and probably on most of the West Coast, I doubt whether there's a tribe today that has a number of full-blooded Indians--you might say, a hundred per cent Indians. There is such a mixture of different races of Indians nowadays that it (has) necessitated that they talk only in King's English; so that's the main thing--that they talk English to where they've gradually forgotten their dialect or their Indian tribal language which I haven't. I've forgotten quite a bit of the Yakima. I grew up as a youngster and my cousins in Nespelem were of the Yakima-speaking tribe and when we got together in the summertime, we'd play. We'd speak Yakima. That is, myself, I speak the Wenatchee language . . . Indian language. I practice (language) all the time by myself or to whomsoever I find that still talks Indian and we converse. And I find that my practicing solely has helped quite a bit because I



can almost overcome some of the deficiencies of some of the people I converse with. They have a hard time recallin' some of the phrases. As (for) myself, I do too . . . 'cause I have to go back to somebody that is even older than I am or more adept to Indian language.

Steve: Do you see the loss of language as one of the main reasons why many of the stories are not being carried on to the younger generation?

Moses: I think so. It's that case. And actually the system of the whole environmental (aspects). The life style has changed so much with the advent of the radio first and then faster cars and pretty soon we have the cheap television coming in and then, I think, the television has actually cut off a lot of it. People have advanced, you might say, got educated to the TV set. So, nowadays, even you non-Indian people are kicking about it because it's not just a time waste--there's a lot of education in it, yes--but the Indian part of it is that they don't have time (for traditional oral transmission). Their speed of life style has increased at a terrific rate of speed where they got eight cylinder engines and the mode of traffic has changed a lot since the time I first grew up. We had horse: saddle horse, buggy and horse. That way was our mode of travel. That's when all talked Indian languages and practiced our Indian ways. As we cast those off, we come to clothe ourselves with civilization and education and learning. We gradually pushed these (traditional) systems and ideologies aside and we're tryin' to integrate into the life style of the general or, you might say, we're tryin' to flow into society of the United States, America, and the world. So quite a bit of the style of life is lost and I notice our young people. I have a habit of askin' the young people if they can talk any Indian language or what tribe they're from. They shake their head in a sad fashion; some of them wish they could and others are silent about it. But that's the extent of the way I see it is the improvement. (It) is from where I could say a person is stepping out of a teepee into, you might say, a . . . well, we landed a man on the moon. I'm particularly interested in that 'cause my son was really interested in this and that was his work until he resigned from that NASA project. That (project) we know quite a bit about. There you have a great expanse or space or era in the teepee. After (that came) the days the person landed on the moon and now (we) are shooting out material into space. And as I study astronomy . . . you know, space is a long way out there. So, I don't know. The day of talking Indian languages will probably be on tape. Probably in some thin dictionary.

Steve: Do you see any way to keep Indian practices alive?

Moses: Yes. I'm very much encouraged by the fact that we have societies and organizations that are very much interested in this and they're establishing methods and ways to preserve the Indian culture and styles of all the tribes in the United States and South America. As an example,

you see the poor South American Indians nowadays are being overridden like the East Coast was at one time and the Middle West. You know . . . history. You can look into it and find out that this (is) repetition (of treatment) down there in South America where the last few tribes are being decimated for the rich resources that they live in. And, therefore, you take the Indian people nowadays. Their general thinking is: "Well, we couldn't whip them, so we might as well join 'em."

Steve: Do you see teaching some of these Indian practices in classrooms as valid?

Moses: I think it's a wonderful thing for the non-Indians all over the world to be interested enough to give a pat on the Indian civilization's back (and) to try to continue and to preserve these styles of life and languages. One disadvantage is most of the Indians now (find it) rather hard to master for the simple reason that the pronunciation is very different. Your language style of speaking and talking (is different). The larynx is developed different in Indians. Of course, you can't pronounce in English what the Indian can and the idioms and all the short-cuts in Indian language is terrific. It even outdoes Latin, Greek, and whatever dead languages you have. It's similar to, say, French because you put the horse before the cart in general speaking while in Indian you put the cart before the horse. You could say things backwards. You might be a linguist and speak a dozen languages and yet not know what I'm talking about when I say the English language--I hate to say it--is one of the lowest languages that the world has ever known. According to our dictionary . . . see . . . as you trace it, graph it out. In your lifetime soon, you'll find out that it's not like the Indian language. It's always changing and you have your areas to . . . you're supposed to speak the King's English that came from England. Ok, nowadays, you have Southern, Northern, the Bostonian, the Brooklyn accent and you have the East and West and the drawl of the West. They all have their own idiosyncracies and different forms of expression. In the Indian language, it is not (that way). Everyone, at the inception of time and history in this country, their language was pure and they did not change unless it took a million years which, no doubt, probably our civilization was on this North America to my estimation; probably two or three hundred years (after) or whensoever the Ice Age let us live here. Another thing I'm going to bring up here. This is my belief from my study and research. To many of my--I might as well say right here so people learn a little bit--too many people are tryin' to classify us as Orientals, that we came over the Bering Sea. They try to claim that we came over there. They cannot prove (it) with I don't care how many Ph.D.s they have in back of their names or howsoever long they've studied Indians or history. They haven't traversed the North. If they can go by snowmobile, by dogsled from the nearest town like where they dug for oil up there in Alaska and (then) go to the North Pole, that would be an eighth or tenth of a

step that would have involved the days that they said we came over. Even fifty thousand years back in history, it would have been impossible to walk over an ice cap anywhere from two to ten miles thick. What would you have eaten? Where would you have gotten your water? And stuff like that. Everything would have been so cold that everything would have been froze. I just couldn't imagine. Animals couldn't survive in the (cold). No people could have come over there. It's our belief--and we have this yet to record on a recorder or on paper--that we originated here. You have your bibles and all that stuff, St. John and Luke and Mark, and you have a wonderful Christmas festivity and all that stuff. And you go back to the Old Testament and you go way back. We are similar in that, yet it's lost to us already, but I know it faintly in my mind from what the people was tellin' me. We are (from) way back when. Some tribes might still have a hold on it, our origin. Our tribes here have lost it even with myself and, I dare say, I won't make up a story to say, "This is how it was." That's the way things are with the Indian on the North American continent. Nowadays, yes, we are in a turmoil with civilization--such as we have people ask me, "What do you think of Wounded Knee?" Well, we didn't revive it. In fact, there's stickers to say we didn't start it. And I could see that we're absolved from all fault of it 'cause (of) the poor people that were decimated there. That's the genocidal practices that was initiated there from the head of the government right down to the last corporal. That was the attitude until 1932. That's in history. When Franklin D. Roosevelt got in there, he appointed a Commissioner (of Indian Affairs) which cut all of this stuff out. (He) revised the laws as much as he could to cut this out. We were on the block all the time up 'till then. And nowadays, we have these outbursts for the simple reason . . . each civilization, non-Indian and non-white have hot-blooded people; young people that get out there and (begin) feeling their oats. You get up and hoop and holler. That's the way our braves used to be a thousand years ago. When they got to teenage time, they'd want to go out to get a scalp, make a coup on the enemy. That was the style. No different today. You look at all that young people that's gettin' into trouble at that time. They just feel that same growin' outburst of energy and some of 'em take the wrong road to do it and that's where our jails have come up.

The heavy emphasis Moses lays upon the loss of language is a theme which runs through all of these interviews. The loss of Indian languages between generations has forced oral narratives to be re-introduced in altered form into English. The difficulty many elderly Indian people who were raised entirely in their language have translating into a foreign language is understandable. Moses has doggedly maintained a speaking knowledge of his language and has passed many tales on to his grandchildren. His comments upon accelerated change within the last two generations relative to previous similar periods in his great-grandparents' time should serve as an ominous warning for those few isolated areas where the Indian language is still maintained as the primary

language. Questioning the historical accuracy of what has been written about Native American history gives the reader, I'm sure, a perspective unlike the usual dependency upon written documents so heavily relied upon by Western scholarship.

The next interview with Helen Peterson deals with much of the same subject matter as did the previous three. However, Helen works a memorat into the discussion and brings in material revealing her locale. Helen is a Makah Indian lady living in Neah Bay, Washington. The Makah Reservation is on the northwest tip of the State of Washington. Traditionally, the Makahs were whale hunters; today many of the people work in fishing and lumbering.

1/1/76      Neah Bay, Washington

Steve:      How old are you?

Helen:      I'm seventy years old now.

Steve:      Helen, do you think the way stories were passed on before . . . down from your grandparents to your parents and down to you is being lost now as the older people pass away.

Helen:      Oh yes, there is much lost. It is lucky that we have quite a bit of it. Like I said, we were taught to know it took place . . . but there have been so many things that have been lost too.

Steve:      What do you see . . . how do you see this affecting young people today . . . losing these stories and not carrying on the traditions that you've carried on from your parents and grandparents?

Helen:      That was asked to me (once) before and I feel that we cannot go back. We cannot go back to the way our great-, great-grandfathers lived. We cannot. We just have to go ahead and pick out what's good from our culture and what's good from this white culture.

Steve:      In this area (Neah Bay) a lot of courses are being taught in the schools on language and basketmaking and some of these other things. Don't you think that is important for the young people to know those things from . . .

Helen:      Well, yes it is. It is important in its place. I think everything has a place in life. And I think Indian culture has its place. I think you should know . . . like I said, that we are taught to know our history and I believe it has its place.

Steve:      Isn't it true that, for example, right now they tell Indian stories to students in classrooms here?

Helen: Well, I have been working with Nora Barker and Ethel Caplanhoo and I have been working (with) the children here in Neah Bay for the last six years. And we felt we were getting someplace with them when we went from one class to the other. Uhm . . . with the songs and we'd (spend) say thirty minutes in each class and go to the next class. And the last two years things have changed because they went to the open classroom . . . so they brought just those that were interested in the culture which broke up our way we were teaching before. Now . . . there are a lot of children now that . . . quite a few children that are really doin' good in language and interested in the culture. And I think (they) will carry on after we're gone.

Steve: Had language ever been taught in a public school here before you started teaching it?

Helen: No. No, it never had.

Steve: What other things did you do during the half hour? You taught language and . . .

Helen: Nora taught singing. She taught the language. Of course, I helped her. And then I taught the folklore and they asked us to lecture the children. So we always . . . every chance we got we lectured them in the way they should live, the way our people lived, and they were very interested in the way things were a long time ago.

Steve: How old are these students?

Helen: Well, we started from kindergarten . . . and over to the sixth grade at elementary. And Nora and Ethel worked with the high school. I didn't want to work at the high school. I had a chance to and sometimes I do.

Steve: What do Ethel and Nora do at the high school?

Helen: They teach the language and songs. And I think Nora has sometimes talked about history.

Steve: Do you teach basketmaking in the schools?

Helen: We have three basket weavers--very good from one family--because they were taught as little ones to help with the family. There were eight sisters I believe. Now three of the sisters are teaching basketwork. They're very good basket weavers . . . one of the best.

Steve: Has this discovery out here--the Ozette dig area that Professor Daugherty has been working on--brought in new ways of weaving baskets that had been forgotten by the Makahs?

Helen: I understand it has. See, they say they've found a lot of baskets that were in good condition and there was a boy there that was taking . . . studying craft and basketmaking and I heard that he had some people working a spruce root basket and cedar root basket which are not made anymore. I think they are doing that now.

Steve: What kind of value do you think the students gain by being taught crafts or being taught to sing or to speak their language? What value do you think this has for them as they grow up?

Helen: Well, I take from myself (personal experiences) and what I think they . . . from my time I've saved a little bit of it 'cause of my grandmother was still living. She taught us to work with our hands. She was a widow. She used to work in the Lamplight (restaurant). She'd weave baskets. We'd help her with her grass and anyway we could. We were taught. They taught the young people to sit down--sit down to be quiet and work with your hands--and make something 'cause they always know what to do and you'll always going to be good at your work.

Steve: Do you think that teaching language and songs and talking to the students about their history gives them a better idea about how they fit into this area or how they fit into the culture or how they look at themselves? What do you think it helps them do by teaching them this?

Helen: We're hoping that . . . we're hoping that it helps them. And I don't see how they couldn't be helped because they get to be proud of their ancestry and they could know what to talk about (and) be able to do something. Not anyone can do. Not many people can do. They can dance their own dances and some of the dances are handed down (and) belong to different families and I think it gives you a pride, a belonging and a something that you have that's valuable.

Steve: What types of things in modern society that you didn't have when you were young do you think are making it hard to help young people appreciate their past? What types of things that they have now that you didn't have when you were young draw them away from respecting or appreciating their past?

Helen: Well, life is altogether different than it was long ago because you have been taught to do this way because the white people do it this way . . . that (white) is the way. That is the only way to do it. Their (young people) life is so different now. I think it's quite a burden for them to be trying to live up to, well, the way the Jones' live. They want to have a trailer house; four bedroom, three bedroom home. They want a stereo, they want a--what you call it?--floor-to-floor rug all over?

Steve: Wall-to-wall carpeting?

Helen: Wall-to-wall carpet. They want cars. And I think this is a burden to especially young married people because I don't think that's all there is to life. I certainly don't believe that it's all there is to life because when you're burdened down with debts and worries and want to go to the top. I don't know.

Steve: Could you explain how the Makahs have come to lose their language?

Helen: (In school when I was young), if they heard us talk Indian, why they'd threaten to wash our mouth with soap. So they did everything to quench our . . . to do away with all our culture songs and just parties (gatherings) and everything.

Steve: The (Indian) Agency did?

Helen: Yeah.

Steve: How long ago?

Helen: From the beginning of the Agency.

Steve: They wouldn't let you speak the language?

Helen: They wanted to do away with everything. They wanted to do away with . . . when I was going to school, they wanted to do away with the language. And when I started to school, I couldn't talk English.

Steve: And they would only let you talk English in school?

Helen: Yeah.

Steve: Well, what did they do about feasts around here? Did they stop you from having feasts?

Helen: Yeah. Maybe I should mention . . . maybe I better tell you. Do you want me to tell about that?

Steve: Sure.

Helen: Steve, I want to tell you about this . . . about how we lost a lot of our language, a lot of our stories and different things . . . because during my grandfather's time, the Agency . . . they want to stop all . . . and the missionaries . . . they wanted to stop the language. Now, anybody that was caught giving a party was put in jail. Now my mother told me about this old man that was a slave in our family. My family was very good to their slaves. They were very good to them. And this old man, Jack (our slave), gave a party and

he was put in jail. Now while he was in jail he composed a song. Now the song said, "Doctor which wants to make a jailbird out of me. He wants to make me a little robin." Long ago the little boys used to play with robins. Sometimes they would put them in a little home-made cage or something.

Now this happened quite a few times. People were put in jail for giving a party, giving out presents, or singing their song. Now I think that the way they (Makahs) used to do is to go out of the reservation and have a bone (stick) game or they would sing songs. One time we had a real mean Agency (Indian agent). The name was Dr. \_\_\_\_\_. Now they (the Agency staff) said, "We're not going to have Makah Day (yearly festivity), no celebration, no Indian dancing." Now the people really felt bad about this and they said, "What shall we do?" Now they (Makah people) said, "Let's go to Tatoosh Island." And the La Push (Quinalt Reservation) people used to go over there and camp for it to be close to the fishing banks. So they said, "Let's go over there and we will celebrate Makah Day with those people." So everybody went that could. They had all the launches and all the boats brought people that had no way of going. Some went in a canoe. And I don't think anybody was left at home. So I went. I went on my uncle's boat and we went ashore and we brought our own food. Everybody brought cakes and fish or barbecued salmon and we had a big picnic with the La Push people. And we danced and had a good time and they had bone game. And then, you know that place at Tatoosh that can . . . a surf can come just all of a sudden even if it's calm and all of a once there'll be a big surf? And we looked out there and there's (a) great big surf comin' up . . . comin' on the beach and they said, "Let's get out . . . let's get out. Let's go home right away." Everybody gathered their children. And my mothers says, "We all better get going." And we got in our canoe and we're goin' out to our launch and I said, "I'm not going to look at the waves." I said, "I'm going to look towards shore." And then I heard somebody say, "Someone tipped over!! Someone tipped over!!" Well, it was lucky. It was just boys. Everybody got out. It was a miracle everybody got out safe. Everybody come home and the Agency Mrs. (Agent's wife) was really mean. She was Indian too but she was from Oklahoma. She was sittin' down on (the) porch at her house and looked pretty miserable because . . . well, I don't believe anybody was left home. Everybody was laughing and having a good time.

Now this (getting caught giving a party) happened to my mother too, but they would . . . only my mother was entertaining some people from Washington, D.C. Now, Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, the Agency (lady) didn't know this. My mother had a big picnic on the beach and invited all the old people. They are all sitting around singing their songs and pretty soon this here Agency (lady), Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ come along and she followed my mother. Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ was a tall woman. My mother was sorta little. And she got up with my mother, (she) look(ed) in the pots and she says,



"What are you cooking? What are you cooking? You know you're not supposed to have a party." My mother didn't pay attention to her. Pretty soon she disappeared and she come back with two policemen. And they're already serving people their food (by this time). And she (Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_) didn't know these guests were from Washington, D.C. They were inspectors 'cause they (Makahs) sent for inspectors. Only Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ didn't know that. The policemen spoke up and says, "Well the Agency has told us that . . . gave us authority to take everybody's name that's here. They will be in trouble because, you know, you're not supposed to have a party . . . not supposed to have a gathering." Well, my mother is laughing to herself 'cause she knew these people was listening. It was true what they (Makah people) had sent a complaint about how they were . . . how these Agencies (Agency staff) were so mean: wouldn't let them sing, wouldn't let them have their parties. So it wasn't long after that the Agency (Indian Agent and his wife) got a word that they were to be transferred right away. They were supposed to go 'cause they'd been treating the Indians mean. Then they got authority not to stop their singing because it wasn't harming anybody. And that's the way it was. The Agency and missionaries worked together because they wanted us to forget our culture . . . forget our language. And that's the way it was long ago.

As the beginning of this interview points out, Helen and several other Makah ladies in the community are actively participating in educating children in traditional crafts, songs, language, and tales. In the terms I began with in this discussion, they have become active in the "experiential continuation" process, though in a setting heretofore not used for past generations: that of the classroom. Yet, being a "tradition maintenance facilitator" is not limited to only Indian communities. There is a great need for similar instruction in reservation border areas where Indian students attend white public schools as a minority of the student body or where they attend off-reservation Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools. A program of "tradition maintenance facilitation" was set up experimentally at Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon from 1972 until 1974. In this program, "experiential continuation" of activities from home areas was one of the program's main objectives.<sup>3</sup> What purpose would "experiential continuation" serve at this school? If students return home and drop out because they cannot adjust to the lack of need satisfiers at school which are found in their home environment, "experiential continuation" serves to make them feel they are in a less inimical environment. If parents angrily protest that their children are severing ties with their past through white man's invention, classroom education, it can serve to appease their fears by pointing to continued traditional links in new settings. If students seek both a maintenance of traditional knowledge and a knowledge of the ways of the white man, then "experiential continuation" serves to uphold the traditional and still provides simultaneous alternate courses to travel. If whites showed an interest and appreciation for Indian traditions by amply providing many "experiential continuation" activities, the self-concept and ethnic pride of the students

would be bolstered. The aforementioned program set up in Oregon had a staff which acted as "tradition maintenance facilitators" by setting up situations whereby students could participate in or observe activities traditionally a part of their life at home. Students at the school came from throughout the Northwest and Alaska. They had available activities which included trips to dog sled races, root festivals, pow-wows and potlatches. Also, trips to go salmon fishing and to attend and participate in Indian rodeos were taken. Native American art and cooking classes were offered once a week. All dorms were provided with many paperbacks dealing with Indian folklore and history. As often as possible, those chosen were written by Native Americans. Students chose many movies for evening showing which dealt with their cultural history. Additionally, movies depicting the Indian in situations unlike the typical stereotyping examples such as Cheyenne Autumn were shown. Beading, choker, and dance costume materials were provided as work rewards for students who wanted such items but couldn't afford them. The staff of this program served as facilitators in aiding the students to link their new living situation away from home with those experiences they now lacked.

Native Americans in colleges have needs just as great as those in high schools and elementary schools. The experimental program initiated by the English Department at the University of Oregon by Barre Toelken is an excellent example of sensitivity to varying concepts of learning among certain minority groups. With this program, a special English Composition course was set up for Native Americans in order to deal with:

the more delicate problems of cultural alignment, world-view, and all those various and distinctively different ways of processing the world of reality which may impede the ability of even the smartest student in his task of finding out what we are talking about in any institution, not academic, aligned to the European lineal world-view. To do otherwise, it seems to me, is to assure failure of most of our ethnic minorities in the system, even where extreme efforts are being made to aid in their survival.<sup>5</sup>

In this class, students met on "Indian time" and sat in Indian patterning, that is, they sat in a circle. As a Creek Indian man, Dr. William J. Benham, points out in a recent article entitled, "A Philosophy of Indian Education":

Serious attempts being made at some schools to help transmit a small part of the cultural heritage of the Indian child should be enlarged and extended. This is needed to even a greater degree for the education of the Indian child than would appear to be needed in considering the education of his counterpart in the general population. This is true because in the latter, it is well accepted that the school is a cultural transmission instrument. A minority student in a majority society may have few social institutions which are supportive of his culture. Thus, an additional burden for the minority culture falls on the school.<sup>6</sup>

As Dr. Benham points out, the school is a "cultural transmission instrument." As such, it can also be used to aid in tradition maintenance for minorities.

The last interview is with Millie McDonald. Millie is from the western side of the Colville Reservation in Washington. She comments that life as she knew it in her youth is different now.

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Steve: What year were you born?

Millie: 1912.

Steve: I was going to ask some questions about what you think about the younger generation today losing Indian culture and Indian history.

Millie: I don't know. I tried to get my kids not to (lose it), you know. I tell 'em everything about everythin'. About what Indians do years ago. But they don't seem . . . my oldest daughter really is interested in it, Cathy. But the rest of 'em, they just turn to white more . . . forgettin' a lotta things Indians can do.

Steve: What types of things do you think have happened since you've been young that make young Indian people not as interested anymore?

Millie: I don't know.

Steve: What is there around today that wasn't around when you were young?

Millie: Lotta things that isn't around (now). They haven't . . . they're not raised like I am. Everything we had to do the Indian way. When they got modern, they just forgot about the Indian culture and everything. Like we go out in spring with my mother when I was young. We get bitterroots, wild carrots. We even help 'em get that there moss off the trees and barbequed it, you know, in a pit. Then after it's done, we whack it up and dice it, dry it, and put it away for winter. An' the same with service berries, bitterroots, chokecherries, Indian carrots. We never did have camas. And we didn't know nothing . . . we('d) get camas from my aunt, my grandma. My dad's sister lived in Mallott. They go out in last part of April and dig. They dig two, three gunny sacks full.

Steve: So you think that because they don't have to do things like that anymore that . . .

Millie: Yeah. That's (been) our livin'.

Steve: And so it's like a lot of modern conveniences such as buying food in a supermarket instead of digging it yourself?

Millie: That's right.

Steve: Are there other things that you think . . .

Millie: Like buyin' everything . . . go to the supermarket an' you can buy everything cooked. An' also I didn't have to go to store but once a year. My dad would go down, sell five or six ton of hay . . . buy enough flour, sugar, coffee, lard, things for the winter and we're home. We never (did) go every other day to the big store to buy bread an' this . . .

Steve: What are some of the other things that you had that they don't have?

Millie: Well, we tanned hide . . . tanned hides an' we dried salmon, deer meat. My folks used to go out in the fall (for) about two month way up in the Cascade (Mountains) and hunt. An' my mother's got (had) a drying rack 'bout as long as this room here an' about that wide. Didn't have no screen in them days. She used red willow . . . put big holes in the middle an' lay them willows 'cross an' lay the dried meat on there. (They'd) dry about eight or ten deer . . . hammer it (meat) down an' pack it in gunny sacks--clean gunny sacks an' haul 'em back--back in the buggy. And that's our winter supply. Then they('d) have a big garden. (We'd) cook corn, cut it off the cob an' dry it--potatoes in root cellar, carrots, onions.

Steve: Well, do you think . . .

Millie: If they (young people) had to go through like we did in my time, they would starve to death. They're too lazy to even go out there an' dig camas or anything.

Steve: So you just see that a lot of conveniences that people have now have taken them away from the traditional ways?

Millie: Yeah. Very few people you see that fix up Indian food now.

Steve: Do you think there is some way to teach young people a little bit about Indian history and the culture and traditions in schools?

Millie: They're (young people) not interested. Even this Indian language . . . you can't try to teach 'em. They'll just set there. They think . . . they don't have it in their mind to learn. They just listen. I tried to learn 'em the Indian language . . . lot them kids I noticed set there, not interested in language. They'll just set there just to be listenin' to you. (Only two) kids out of my class was really interested in learnin' an' they'd write it down. These other kids just set there an' tease one another.

Steve: Do you think a lot of that might have to do with them not having the language spoken in their homes?

Millie: That's right.

Steve: Now your parents spoke . . .

Millie: Nothing but Indian. You take up in Canada . . . from all over up (there). Them little kids all talk Indian. They'll talk a mile a minute in Indian. The further up (in Canada) you go, the better the Indians are talkin' to their kids and they all understand.

Steve: Why do they speak it more up there than down here?

Millie: I don't know. See, they never believed in school up there in the early years and down here, they go off to school right off the bat. And up there, they keep their children home. A lot of them don't even go to school at all. The parents . . . all they got is their Indian language.

Steve: Did any of the schools around here forbid the children to speak their Indian language?

Millie: When I first went to the Mission in 1918, there was nothin' but Indian. No English. All Indian kids talked Indian. (I) went down (to the school) and I never could learn how to speak English. So my dad come down and told Father \_\_\_\_\_, "Why don't you put your foot down and make them all speak English? That's what they're here for . . . to learn how to speak English. They can talk Indian when they get home." So Father \_\_\_\_\_ put his foot down and anybody (who) got caught talkin' Indian, they got punished. Now (today) it's the other way around. They want them to learn it and they (children) don't want to learn.

Steve: Do you think that the Indian culture as you remember it will be lost in another two generations?

Millie: No. In my youngest daughter's generation, I think it will be lost. After the next thirty years, there won't hardly be any Indians left. When my generation all passes away, well that's it. Pretty soon it will be all English . . . then Indian folk will die off too. They'll forget about this.

Millie sees little hope for traditional retentions among youth. If one were to suggest that a folklorist has skills of great value to Native Americans to assist in any of the many "tradition maintenance facilitator" roles mentioned in the interviews thus far, the Pandora's box would again be opened over the question of "applied folklore."<sup>7</sup> Yet, the folklorist is seemingly dependent upon isolating and studying traditions in a pluralistic society. One wonders what will be left within the scope of "traditional" folklore genres if no

attempt is made to maintain them in people's experiences, rather than only to record them in books or on tapes and records for dusty shelves in archives. Many feel any teacher of folklore is an applied folklorist. Richard Bauman feels that in teaching folklore to college students the purpose is to "develop in students a sensitivity to traditional culture and the esthetic dimension of life, and to foster an appreciation for cultural diversity. In this realm, I maintain, teachers of folklore are engaging in applied folklore up to their very ears."<sup>8</sup> Dell Hymes had the following to say in his latest Journal of American Folklore article:

Much "applied folklore" is genuinely part of the tradition with which it deals, a part of their adaptation to new conditions of performance. So also close study of old texts may not be merely antiquarian, but the means by which old meanings can take on new life, perhaps partly in print instead of the voice, perhaps partly in another language, but with continuity (like Homer and Ecclesiastes) nevertheless.<sup>9</sup>

This statement hits the mark, for it relates a Western document like Homer's to the same situation any tradition faces when it needs to adapt. Dell Hymes follows his remarks with a highly polished rendering of the Kathlamet "Sun's Myth" in which adaptation is obvious, but so is the retained esthetic.

It seems reasonable that one could easily apply a program model of assisted tradition maintenance to any discernible grouping of people with shared cultural symbols in any form. Such a model would develop situationally, depending upon the specific needs of the group as that group defines their needs.

Melville Jacobs wrote despairingly in 1967 of the Indian "cultural decimation" in the State of Washington.<sup>10</sup> He felt that there were still "fragments and samples" of oral tradition salvageable from a few isolated Native groups.<sup>11</sup> If the feelings shared by the people interviewed in this article were shared by scholars and those administrators in government directing cultural expenditure of monies, those last "fragments and samples" of tradition could be saved for future generations of Native Americans.

#### NOTES

1. See Barre Toelken, "Cultural Bilingualism and Composition: Native American Education At The University of Oregon," in English for American Indians: A Newsletter of the Office of Education Programs, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, ed. William R. Slager (University of Utah, Spring 1971), pp. 29-32.
2. Larry George's presentation in Portland for the 1974 American Folklore Society Meeting made use of a filmstrip projector and tapes. George, a Native American, participated in Session C, "Native America I: The Use of Folklore in the Education of Indian Students."

3. Leo Henry, Sheldon Louthan and Steve Mannenbach, A New Day Dawning: Native Initiated Guidance Program (Salem, Oregon: Chemawa Press, 1974), pp. 35-38.
4. Toelken, pp. 29-32.
5. Ibid., p. 31.
6. William J. Benham, "A Philosophy of Indian Education," Journal of American Indian Education 15 (October 1975): 3.
7. See Dick Sweterlitsch, ed., Papers on Applied Folklore, Folklore Forum Bibliographic and Special Series (B&SS), no. 8 (1971).
8. Richard Bauman, "Proposal for a Center of Applied Folklore," Folklore Forum B&SS, no. 8 (1971): 1.
9. Dell Hymes, "Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth," Journal of American Folklore 88 (1975): 355.
10. Melville Jacobs, "Our Knowledge of Pacific Northwest Indian Folklores," Northwest Folklore 2 (1967): 20.
11. Ibid., p. 21.